



## Our 30th anniversary

When BODHI turned 25 I (Colin) wrote an [essay](#) reflecting on our first quarter century. This reviews our first 30 years, which will also be discussed at BODHI's first [public meeting](#), to be held in Canberra on June 22.

Our work has three main dimensions; (1) projects, (2) communication and (3) engagement with other groups. In all we have had [about 50 projects](#), with over 15 [partner](#) NGOs, in seven countries (more than are shown in the map below). Our projects have had three broad phases (see map). The first decade was, almost exclusively, working with Tibetans, both in India and, in Tibet - the microcredit scheme, conceived by Prof Melvyn Goldstein, called the [Revolving Sheep Bank](#). In the second project phase we mainly worked with [Chakmas](#), another South Asian minority, mainly to support [SNEHA](#)'s education and social transformation work in the far north eastern Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh. In the third project phase we have increasingly worked with [Dalits, inspired by Dr Ambedkar](#). See map for a summary of the main areas defined by time.

One project that [Susan](#) (BODHI's late co-founder) and I were particularly pleased about was training village [teachers](#) from remote parts of Uttar Pradesh, in partnership with the Loreto Convent in Kolkatta and their [programme](#) for barefoot teachers. We would love to extend this, with the [Youth Buddhist Society](#), but Indian red tape (the need for FCRA status of our partners) currently makes this very hard (see picture of a typical school below).

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Three main phases, by time, of BODHI's activity: (1) mainly Tibetans (1989-1999); (2) mainly with Chakmas (2003-2017) and (3) mainly with dalits inspired by the life and teaching of Dr Ambedkar (2005-present).



One of the many similar schools I visited near Sankissa, near Mainpuri, in Uttar Pradesh in 2009, organised by [Suresh Bauddha](#). Many other related images are [here\(https://www.bodhi-australia.com/barefoot-teachers.html\)](https://www.bodhi-australia.com/barefoot-teachers.html)

BODHI's writing and speaking has mainly been in over 50 newsletters and editorials, published since 1991, and some conference papers and chapters, including a protest about academic censorship in China about Tibetan self-immolation and the plundering of Tibetan wildlife. Versions were published in an edited [book](#), the [Tibetan Review](#), and [Global Change Musings](#).

BODHI has also engaged with several other Buddhist organisations, including the [United Nations Day of](#)

[Vesak](#) (attendance at 7 meetings, chairing workshops etc), the [International Network of Engaged Buddhists](#) (4 meetings), Tzu Chi (both in [Australia](#) and [Taiwan](#)), the [Karuna Trust](#) and [Sakyadhita International](#). Involvement has included many committee members, including [Devin Bowles](#) and [Elise de Vido](#), recently elected to head the revival of BODHI in the USA. Four current committee members and one partner are attending the first major Sakyadhita conference, to be held in [Australia](#), later this month (see below).

## **Karunadeepa's tour**

Karunadeepa, the leader of one of our major project partners, the [Bahujan Hitay Women and Child Welfare Society](#), safely arrived in Australia on June 17. She is speaking once more in Melbourne, once in Canberra and also at the [Sakyadhita conference](#), in the Blue Mountains. Her schedule is [here](#).

## **BODHI and human rights**

Human rights have always been central to our work. BODHI was founded around the time of the Tiananmen massacres and within four years of my first meetings with displaced Tibetans in India and Nepal. In addition, climate change, drought, youth bulges, and absence of a “demographic dividend” wrought in part by high population growth have also been consistent themes of this newsletter since the first issue in 1991. Social scientists, governments, and the media may not comprehend and in fact willfully ignore some or all of the *longue durée* context of today's social crises.

## **Violence against women in Honduras**

This [story](#) about violence against women in Honduras provides horrifying insight into the violence against women and girls in the "dry corridor" of Central America. Here are two snippets: *"The level of violence in Honduras has gotten [attention](#), but the deeper cultural factors at work are less often plumbed. After two weeks of interviews with more than two dozen women in five Honduran cities and their far outskirts, a portrait emerges of a country where day-to-day violence and misogyny collide with restrictive policies to narrow women's options to a vanishingly small window of possibility—driving them, sometimes, to flee."* And, in addition to the banning of abortion *"The Honduran government, with backing from the Catholic and Evangelical churches, exacerbates this crisis by limiting women's options after sexual violence. Honduras is the only nation in Latin America that bans emergency contraception outright, including for rape victims."*

**THANK YOU!!**

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The names of over 330 people and organisations who have tangibly supported BODHI Australia in its first 30 years are listed [here](#). We especially thank [His Holiness the XIVth Dalai Lama](#), Prof [Melvyn Goldstein](#), and the following, all now deceased: [Baron von Thyssen](#), Ven [Sangharakshita, Lord Avebury](#) and Prof [Abdus Salam](#). Some of these are described on our website [here](#). We are also deeply grateful to our advertisers ([Biodistributors](#) and [Fortress Learning](#)), donors, partners, [advisors](#) and [committee members](#), past and present.

BODHI in both Australia and the US has an unrepayable debt to the late [Susan Starr Butler](#) (nee Woldenberg) the co-founder of each NGO. We also thank the late Dr [Dennis Wright](#), BODHI Australia's faithful third director, from 1994 until his premature death in 2013.

### **The next 30 years?**

The world continues to be deeply divided and unfair; civilisation is in peril. To help us continue our work, please consider making a donation which you can do safely by clicking [here](#). The end of the financial year is upon us. Donations are tax deductible if you pay income tax in Australia.

Please note that we can no longer accept credit card donations, but bank transfers, cheques and paypal are fine. (Transfers do not attract charges).

You may also consider remembering BODHI in your will.



#### **FROM SEN BOB BROWN**

that “from small things big things  
atching the heartwarming reach of  
o some of the world’s neediest people, I  
m small things good things flow. I am  
to have been associated with BODHI  
t 30 years.

ations to everyone who has helped with  
nd with BODHI a bountiful next 30  
ator [Bob Brown](#). Photo: Bob and  
rliament House, Canberra, 2009.

